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## **CUA URGES LGUS ADDRESS MALNUTRITION**

The president of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines called on his fellow local leaders to create programs that address the "serious problem of malnutrition" in the country.

"As the country commemorates National Nutrition Month, I urge my fellow local leaders to tackle the serious problem of malnutrition in the country by creating long-term programs that will support families in our communities," Cua said.

He said that due focus should be placed in addressing the nutrition needs of infants, as the National Nutrition Council (NNC) reports that only 13.8 percent of Filipino children aged six to 23 months have their minimum nutritional requirements met.

Experts say that the stage of early childhood from one to three years is crucial in their development.

The NNC also said that 26.7 percent or about 3.2 million children in the country suffer from malnutrition.

"Our children are long-term inhabitants of our communities. As future stewards we should ensure that they are healthy and able to preserve our heritage for the generations that will come after them," said Cua.

"There is an economic benefit to ensuring that our children are healthy. Healthier citizens mean that government shells out less money for medical services. Instead, we could redirect these funds towards other social services like education," the governor added.

Cua also hoped that a multi-sectoral nutrition project seeking to address malnutrition in the country succeeds and will be eventually implemented across the whole country.



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The Philippine Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Project (PMNP) was launched earlier this year and implemented in 235 local government units.

The project is a collaboration involving the government, non-government organizations, and international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and World Bank.

The project provides participating municipalities with packages of support in the form of performance-based grants (PBG) for the LGU and input support packages such as primary health care and nutrition commodities, municipal grant allocation (MGA) for the covered communities/barangays, and capacity building and technical assistance packages.

"We hope for the success of this project, as this could point the way for how we can address malnutrition from a systems perspective, but still by empowering LGUs," Cua said.

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ULAP is the umbrella organization of all leagues of local government units and local government officials in country, serving as the focal representative and mouthpiece of the subnational government in all policy and program platforms to amplify our unified advocacy towards the strengthening of LGUs into able partners in nation-building.

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